

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 02163 210941Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FOR NEA ONLY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OTRA, MILA, SA
SUBJ: NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY FIELD TRIP

REF: (A) JIDDA 2031, (B) STATE 61958

1. EMBASSY TENTATIVELY CONCURS IN SCHEDULING BRIEF VISIT BY WAR COLLEGES TO RIYADH; THESE VISITS, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT BE MORE THAN A DAY TO TWO DAYS AT THE MOST IN LENGTH. DURING SUCH A VISIT, WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO SCHEDULE MEETINGS WITH ECONOMIC MINISTERS AND PERHAPS FOREIGN MINISTER -- IF HE IS IN TOWN. DEPARTMENT UNDERSTANDS, OF COURSE, THAT THE CONTENTS OF A RIYADH PROGRAM ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN UNCERTAIN UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE BECAUSE OF SAG'S RELUCTANCE TO CONFIRM MEETINGS BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF PRINCIPALS.

2. IT IS TOO EARLY TO SAY WITH ANY CONFIDENCE WHETHER CALLS ON STILL MORE SENIOR SAUDI OFFICIALS ARE POSSIBLE. WE WILL ADDRESS THIS ISSUE CLOSER TO THE ARRIVAL DATES.

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3. REGARDING THE BUREAU'S QUESTION ON GROUP'S VISIT AND MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS: WE ARE ALWAYS PRUDENTLY -- AND WE THINK NOT EXCESSIVELY -- CONCERNED ABOUT SECURITY IN SAUDI ARABIA, AND THE MOVEMENTS ABOUT THROUGH THE COUNTRY OF SOME THIRTY SENIOR CIVILIAN AND MILITARY VISITORS WOULD BE WELL KNOWN TO ALL IN ADVANCE; TO TERRORISTS THE VISIT COULD SEEM AN INCITEMENT AND AN OPPORTUNITY.

THE DEGREE OF RISK IS OF COURSE AFFECTED BY MANY FACTORS, SUCH AS THE ATTITUDE OF PALESTINIAN GROUPS TO THE US AND SAUDI ARABIA, AND WHETHER THE MIDDLE EAST BAROMETER IS GOING UP OR DOWN. WE CANNOT, HOWEVER, ASSUME THAT NO SECURITY PROBLEM WILL EXIST, AND FOR THIS REASON URGE THE GROUP BE HERE FOR A SHORTER RATHER THAN A LONGER TIME, AND THAT ALL NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY PARTIES TRAVEL AS A SINGLE GROUP.

4. SHOULD THE AMBASSADOR BE IN RIYADH DURING FIELD TRIP HE WOULD MEET WITH STUDENTS; DCM AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR (PLUS POL/MIL OFFICER) WOULD OTHERWISE BE AVAILABLE TO BRIEF AND ASSIST.
PORTER

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